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今日

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前言

《今日英语时文》的宗旨是给读者提供当今世界上的最新消息以及文化方面的基础知识。其中所收入的文章大多为因特网上精心挑选出来的佳作。我们知道,因特网是信息时代一个典型的特征。它登载世界各个领域的最新动态和消息,让我们得以快捷有效地获取所需要的最新信息。但要想天天浏览因特网并不容易,因为白领阶层不仅没有时间保障,经济上也耗费颇多。此外,长时间在屏幕上寻找理想的材料对眼睛的伤害也是很大的。更为重要的是,即使找到了理想的文章,阅读上可能还有诸多困难。我们正是鉴于这种情况才决定编选这本英语时文读物。经过我们编者的精心选择,既保证了读者们的时间,节省了费用,而且可以通过阅读每一篇文章前面的简洁提示决定是否继续阅读下去。不仅如此,为了方便读者的阅读和提高效率,编者们在可能有理解困难的地方对词句和文化现象进行了注解。除了以上的考虑外,《今日英语时文》的另一个重要宗旨是通过传播信息和优秀文化让读者沉浸在英文的文化氛围中,从而在不知不觉中既提高了文化修养,获得了新的信息,又轻松地学会了英文。

本书主要适合大中专学生以及白领工作人员和大中专院校的老师,为他们进一步提高英语水平和更新专业知识提供快餐。在日益开放的中国,人们逐渐懂得,信息就是力量。因此,获取信息的能力大小在很大程度上决定一个人的成败与否。编选本书的目的正在于此。毫无疑问,那些已经在各个岗位上起重要作用的人员,尤其是那些想通过英语获得最新的信息的读者,为了自如地与外商、外国来访人员交谈,介绍自己的经验,吸取别人长处,将会发现本书既是有益的信息源,亦是自学英语的良友。

本书共开辟热点问题、世界各地、经济、科学与发现、人与自然、社会与生活、娱乐、艺术、青年一代、中国文化等栏目。“热点问题”主要刊载世界上正在发生的热点问题和话题；“世界各地”刊载国外旅游景点、习俗等文章；“经济”栏目中的文章都是关于经济领域最新的信息和动态；“科学与发现”则登载今天或者明天将影响我们生活的东西；“人与自然”中的文章多是探讨人与自然之间的互动、互存、互惠的关系；“社会与生活”栏目旨在探讨人生意义和人生哲学；“娱乐”登载最新的电影、体育、音乐等方面的最新动态和世界的反映；“艺术”栏目介绍世界文化和艺术；“青年一代”主要登载有关青年人的文章，介绍他们感兴趣的话题；“中国文化”介绍中国传统文化和艺术。

本书从立意、栏目的设立，以及章节的具体内容的选定都得到了上海外语教育出版社总编汪义群教授和杨自伍先生的指导和大力支持。我们在此表示由衷的感谢！此书在编选过程中，我们还得到了深圳大学师范学院以及英文系主任徐文博教授和同事们的的大力支持，在此，我们对他们表示致谢！

由于我们水平有限，书中难免有疏漏之处，敬请读者批评指正！

编者

2001 年 10 月于深圳大学

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Albright's Plan to Visit North Korea

By Barbara Slavin

美国和北朝鲜自从 1950—1953 年战争以来一直尚未建立任何外交关系。前美国国务卿奥尔布莱特对北朝鲜的正式访问因此引起世界的关注。美国国内舆论界和学术界也褒贬不一。您读了此文后会持什么样的观点呢？

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will travel to North Korea in the next few weeks to prepare an unprecedented^① meeting between President Clinton and North Korea's leader, Kim Jong Il, senior U. S. officials said Wednesday.

Such a meeting would mark a dramatic upturn^② in relations between the United States and a country Washington long branded a pariah^③ state.

Albright's visit, in itself historic, could take place by the end of this month, the senior U. S. officials said. The invitation to her and to the president was presented by Vice Marshal Jo Myong Rok, Kim's second-in-command.

Jo, in Washington this week, is the highest-level North Korean ever to visit the USA since the two countries fought a bitter war from 1950—1953. The war ended with an armistice^④, not a peace treaty, and Washington and North Korea still lack formal diplomatic relations.

A Clinton-Kim summit would be the culmination^⑤ of a U. S. policy of engagement^⑥ and would be extraordinary in a number of ways.

No U. S. president has met a North Korean leader or visited Pyongyang, the North's Stalinesque capital. The highest previous

① unprecedented: 前所未有的 ② upturn: 好转 ③ pariah: 蔑视的
④ armistice: 停战 ⑤ culmination: 结束, 结果 ⑥ engagement: 对峙

contact was between former president Jimmy Carter and Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il's father, in 1994, when the two countries were on the brink of a crisis over the North's development of nuclear weapons.

An agreement that year to freeze the nuclear program in exchange for energy aid was finalized after Kim Il Sung's death. However, it has taken six years for the son to fully emerge from his father's shadow. This summer, he altered his reputation as an eccentric^① recluse by hosting South Korean leader Kim Dae Jung, also a first.

Critics of U. S. policy toward North Korea say the small communist country has learned to trade meetings for financial aid, which props up^② a repressive system and enables it to avoid economic reforms. Supporters of the policy say that the North Koreans have realized that they must reach out and that engagement is the only way to improve the lot of North Korea's 22 million people, who have suffered years of deprivation and famine.

From *USA TODAY*

① eccentric: 古怪的 ② prop up: 支撑

Bush Gore Hit Trail Again

By Alan Elsner, Political Correspondent

美国每四年举行一次的总统大选牵动着美国公民的心，因为他们认为美国是个自由民主的国家。他们有权利投出自己神圣的一票来决定自己国家未来四年的命运，也希望自己的前途因此受到正面的积极的影响。可以说，美国总统选举集中体现了美国的政治文化。此文可帮助我们更多了解这一点。

WINSTON-SALEM, N. C. (Reuters) — Republican George W. Bush (news-web sites) and Democrat Al Gore (news-web sites) throw themselves back into the battle for swing states^① on Thursday, following their second presidential debate, seeking an edge in a race that is once more a dead heat.^②

The latest Reuters/MSNBC tracking poll^③, taken before Wednesday's debate at Wake Forest University in North Carolina, showed the two candidates deadlocked^④, each with 43 percent of the vote.

Bush, the governor of Texas, was headed for Pennsylvania and Michigan before appearing on CBS's "Late Show with David Letterman." Gore, the vice president, was in North Carolina and Wisconsin.

Polls are tight in all of these states as well as nationally in what is shaping up as the closest presidential race since Democrat John F. Kennedy edged^⑤ Republican Richard Nixon in 1960. There are now 26 days left until the Nov. 7 election.

Snap^⑥ polls showed Bush won Wednesday's second debate but analysts were doubtful that the 90-minute encounter would break the deadlock.

Bush, interviewed Thursday on CBS's "Early Show," said he

① swing states: 影响竞选结果的州 ② dead heat: 不分胜负的结局 ③ tracking poll: 跟踪性民意测验 ④ deadlocked: 陷入僵局 ⑤ edge: 险胜某人 ⑥ snap: 仓促的

had proved he could compete on foreign policy. "I think I might have surprised some people about my ability to converse in foreign policy. I think a lot about it," he said.

Gore said he was unworried about instant polls. "Too much emphasis is put on the snap polls and focus groups and the like," he said on ABC's "Good Morning America."

"Last week the snap polls mostly showed me an overwhelming winner, and then in the days following, some people had a different interpretation. I think that most people will take these three debates as a group and consider all three and then make up their minds about how to vote closer to election day," Gore said.

In the debate, the candidates underwent a detailed examination on domestic and foreign policy, with Bush attacking Gore's credibility^① while Gore questioned Bush's commitment^② to health care for children.

The stakes^③ were high for Bush because foreign affairs was seen as an area of vulnerability^④ for him. Yet he held his own as the discussion veered^⑤ from Russia to Haiti, Rwanda to Somalia, Colombia to the Middle East.

"Bush gained some gravitas^⑥ and probably did enough to pass the test on foreign affairs. Gore proved he could battle his demons and stay civil for 90 minutes," said David Birdsell, a political scientist at Baruch College in New York.

The tone of the 90-minute debate was polite compared to the aggressive encounter the two held eight days ago in Boston. They meet for a third and final debate next Tuesday in St. Louis.

Only at the end did Bush take the gloves off^⑦, accusing Gore of distorting^⑧ many of his positions.

"We all make mistakes. I've been known to mangle^⑨ a syllable or two myself," said Bush, purposely mispronouncing the word "syllable."

But he added, "I think credibility is important. It's going to be important for the president to be credible with the Congress, important for the president to be credible with foreign nations. Yes, I think it's something people need to consider — I think this is an issue."

① credibility: 可信性, 可靠性 ② commitment: 承诺, 保证 ③ stakes: 风险, 赌注 ④ vulnerability: 易受攻击性; 薄弱 ⑤ veer: 转向 ⑥ gravitas: 庄严 ⑦ take the gloves off: 不加遮掩 ⑧ distort: 歪曲, 曲解 ⑨ mangle: 发音犯错误; 误读

Gore replied, "I got some of the details wrong last week in some of the examples I used. I'm sorry about that and I'm going to try to do better. One of the reasons I regret it is that getting a detail wrong interfered several times with the point I was trying to make."

But he insisted his basic points on the state of affairs in Texas remained correct.

"The facts were right, about Texas ranking dead last in families with health insurance and 49th out of 50 for both children and women," he said.

As the debate began the two were offered a chance by moderator Jim Lehrer to present their views of America's role in the world. They agreed that the United States ought to act in a humble fashion while wielding^① its power.

"We're a freedom-loving nation and if we are an arrogant^② nation they (foreign countries) will view us that way, but if we're a humble nation they'll respect us," Bush said.

Gore said, "I agree with that ... the idea of humility is an important one."

The first disagreement came when Bush said he opposed using U. S. forces for what he termed "nation building." He specifically opposed the 1994 U. S. intervention to topple^③ a military regime in Haiti.

"I wouldn't have sent troops to Haiti. I didn't think it was a mission worthwhile. It was a nation-building mission. And it was not very successful," Bush said.

Gore replied, "If you have a situation like that right in our backyard with chaos about to break out and flotillas^④ forming to come across the water and all kinds of violence there, right in one of our neighboring countries there, then I think that we did the right thing there."

① wield: 行使(权力),控制(手段) ② arrogant: 傲慢的,自大的 ③ topple: 推翻,打倒 ④ flotilla: 舰队

Vladimir Putin: Spy Turned Politician

By *Stephen Mulvey*

由于工作的特殊性,俄罗斯总统弗拉基米尔·普京一直被认为是“没有过去”、“立场观点不明”的“黑匣子”式的神秘人物。但自他任总统以后,就成了媒体报道的主要对象。本文披露了俄罗斯总统普京的背景,对他的经历、性格以及近几年的升迁作了较为详细的描述。给读者留下深刻印象的是普京在处理车臣叛乱时的果断和坚毅。

Vladimir Putin is President Boris Yeltsin's chosen successor, and the Russian parliamentary election showed he was the people's favourite too.

Until his appointment in August, he was a little known figure who had spent most of his career working for the Soviet security service, the KGB, including several years as a spy in Germany. In a matter of weeks he had become the most popular politician in the country, and by the end of the year, the acting president^①.

Meteoric rise^②

Mr Putin's meteoric rise began in 1996 when he was invited to Moscow from St Petersburg to start work in the presidential administration, and became a member of the Yeltsin inner circle, known as the "family". By March of the following year he had become deputy head of the presidential administration, and in July 1998 he was appointed to lead the Federal Security Service, one of the successors of the dismantled KGB^③.

Putin's rise

1994: deputy mayor of St Petersburg

① the acting president: 代总统 ② meteoric rise: 流星般的升迁 ③ the dismantled KGB: 解散了的克格勃

1997: deputy head of presidential administration
1998: head of Federal Security Service
1999: secretary of Security Council (March); Prime Minister (August); Acting President (December)

Even in this important position he kept a low profile^①. Far from charismatic^②, he has an expressionless mask-like face, rarely smiles, and speaks softly. For years he had a reputation as a “grey cardinal”^③, a man who wields power quietly, behind the scenes. But suddenly, in August, he was catapulted into the political spotlight^④, and the former *éminence grise*^⑤ quickly came to be seen as a man of action. In response to incursions by Chechen Islamic militants into neighbouring Dagestan, Mr Putin ordered the Russian army to expel them.

Little is known about Mr Putin's KGB career

Then, blaming the Chechens for a series of apartment-block bombings in Russian cities, he told the troops to continue into Chechnya, to root out and destroy the rebels. In an end-of-year address at a Kremlin reception he said Russia had been duty-bound to restore national honour in Chechnya, where the Russian army was humiliated in the conflict of 1994—1996. “We shall not allow the national pride of Russians to be trod upon^⑥,” he said. “We are sure of the power and prosperity of our country.”

Liberal credentials^⑦

But despite his current image as a strong man, Mr Putin has been endorsed^⑧ by some of Russia's best-known liberals and reformers. His predecessor as premier, Sergey Stepashin, described the 47-year-old as a “decent and honest man”. After the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991 he worked with Mayor Anatoli Sobchak in Petersburg.

Mr Putin's popularity has soared during the military campaign in Chechnya. And when Mr Sobchak lost power in 1996 it was another

① keep a low profile: 保持低调形象 ② charismatic: 领袖魅力的 ③ grey cardinal: 不露身份的红衣主教 ④ was catapulted into the political spotlight: 一跃成为公众瞩目的政治中心 ⑤ *éminence grise*: (法)幕后操纵者 ⑥ be trod upon: 遭到践踏 ⑦ Liberal credentials: 自由派的信任 ⑧ endorse: 支持